Administrator's Column

(In this column NASA Activities features an article by NASA Administrator James M. Beggs. These articles focus on subjects chosen by him that address topics of broad interest to the agency's employees. The column this month features an address presented at the opening of the NASA Administrators Exhibit on Aug. 15 at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.)

A Salute to Architects of the Future

I see this exhibit as a tribute not only to those who have guided NASA over the years, but also to hundreds of thousands of others in government, universities and industry who have worked on the NASA programs for over a quarter of a century. So on behalf of all—let me express our deep appreciation for this high honor.

It has been said, by Emerson, I believe, that "the secret of the world is the tie between person and event. Person makes event and event person."

Whether you agree completely with Emerson or not, it is almost a truism that history *is* biography and that decisions of individuals are the foundation points upon which history is written. This has been amply demonstrated in the case of NASA, where our national achievements in aeronautics and space have been sparked by a small group of individuals who have, through accident or design, been the right men in the right jobs at the right time.

I speak, of course, of my five predecessors—Keith Glennan, Jim Webb, Tom Paine, Jim Fletcher and Bob Frosch. Each, in his own way, brought to NASA the character, the experience and the knowledge needed to guide the agency to meet the challenges the times demanded. Each built on the foundation laid by those who came before. Each demonstrated a keen perception of the dynamic forces of change in the world and responded to those forces in kind. And the nation benefited as a result.

NASA's first Administrator was Keith Glennan, a gentle man from North Dakota, with a solid grounding in electrical engineering. He was President of Case Institute of Technology and a former Atomic Energy Commissioner when President Eisenhower nominated him to head NASA in August 1958. That was a month after the President signed legislation establishing the agency, and ten months after Sputnik I, the world's first artificial satellite was launched by the Soviet Union.

It fell to Keith, a good manager and organizer, to consolidate under NASA the United States' civil space program, a program burgeoning with plans and opportunities, but still in its infant stage. Most important was the call from the public and our elected officials to get out in front of and stay ahead of the Russians.

Keith directed the integration under NASA of the government's major scientific and technical programs in aeronautics and space studies. He succeeded superbly and by the end of his tenure in 1961, NASA included not only the facilities and much of the staff of the old National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, but those of the Advanced Research Project Agency, the Naval Research Laboratory and the Army Ballistic Missile Agency as well.

Keith gave the green light to Project Mercury, America's first manned spaceflight program, and under him, NASA began to expand on a broad front ranging from activities to measure the near-earth environment to solar system exploration.

Jim Webb, Keith's successor, moved the agency into high gear to meet the awesome national challenge proposed by President Kennedy on May 25, 1961: to land an American on the moon and return him safely to earth, within the decade of the 1960s.

Known as an aggressive manager within the top echelons of government and industry, Jim brought to NASA the energy, thrust and inspiration needed to succeed. As a student of government and a seasoned bureaucrat (in the best sense of that word)—he had been President Truman's Budget Bureau Director and had worked at high levels of the State Department under Dean Acheson—Jim moved vigorously to cut red tape and put the best minds of government, universities and industry to work on the project.

Jim was not only an energetic, but a highly innovative Administrator. He recognized that one of our great, but unrecognized, national assets was the research capability of the university community. He sought to strengthen that capability and to bring highly talented university scientists and engineers directly into the program.

For 7½ years Jim worked and fought to keep the program on track. His problem was not so much a recalcitrant Congress, because there was a sizeable consensus that supported the effort to be first on the moon. Rather, his major problem was organization: getting it all together—resources, talent, technology—to meet the national goal. In that, he succeeded magnificently. And, in October 1968, secure in the knowledge that it *would* be met, he retired from government service. He had brought America's space program from short-distance sub-ortital flights to the threshold of the moon. Two months later, during the Apollo 8 mission, man was to fly to the neighborhood of the moon for the first time.

our friends and allies to join with us in developing the station. And he called for a government-industry partnership to encourage private sector investment in space-based business.

As you know, we are making progress on all three elements of the President's initiatives. Following Congressional approval, we will be moving into the planning and definition phase of the Space Station. I am very optimistic that we will have some good news on the international front by the end of the year. And we are working closely with industry, not only the aerospace industry, to ease the way for space-based investments.

What do our achievements of the past 12 months add up to?

To me they indicate that our program has demonstrated great reliability and dependability and a new maturity. We do what we set out to do. And, moreover, we make it look easy.

NASA has more than justified its existence and the taxpayer's investment and faith in us. We are indeed, a true national asset. And we can be proud of it.

Much of our success is due to people like you, people whose dedication to excellence, however difficult the task, is the bedrock foundation of this agency's strength.

"The reward of a thing well done is to have done it," wrote Emerson. We have earned that reward manyfold. And I believe we can face the future with pride and with confidence as we prepare for the great challenges of tomorrow.

NASA Transfers Ownership of Viking Lander 1 To Museum

NASA transferred ownership of Viking Lander 1, which is on the planet Mars, to the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., at ceremonies on May 18. This is the first time that a museum will have ownership of an object located on another planet.

The transfer, requested by the Museum's Director Walter Boyne, also includes loaning the official Viking Lander plaque. This plaque renames the lander the Thomas A. Mutch Memorial Station, in memory of the Viking Lander Imaging Team Leader and NASA Associate Administrator for Space Science, who died in a climbing accident in the Himalayas in 1980.

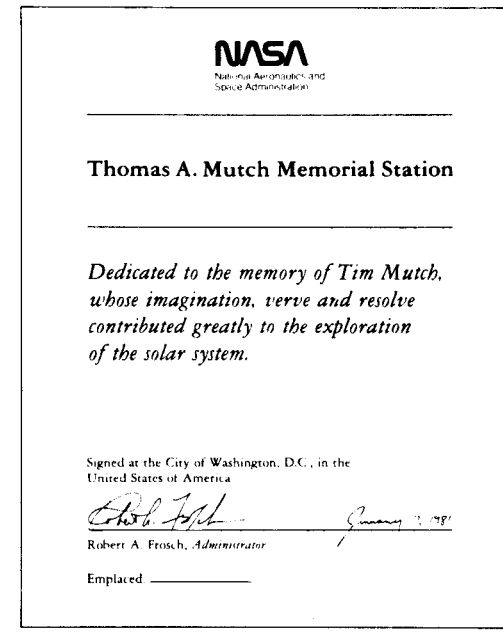
The plaque is scheduled to be placed on the original lander on Mars by American astronauts when they travel to the "Red Planet" at some indefinite time in the future. NASA retains reclaimant rights of the lander for scientific purposes.

The Viking Landers set down on the surface of Mars in 1976, the first American spacecraft to provide close-up views from the surface of another planet.

The landers provided invaluable knowledge of Mars through weather observations and chemical and biological tests. More than 54,000 photographs were taken by the landers and orbiters, which circled overhead. The orbiters also monitored atmospheric water vapor and temperature from the planet.

The Viking mission highlighted the United States Planetary Exploration Program's goals to explore our solar system to obtain a better understanding of the origin and evolution of life and the physical processes that shape man's terrestrial environment.

James M. Beggs, NASA Administrator, and Walter Boyne, Director of the National Air and Space Museum, sign the official documents transfering ownership of NASA's Viking I Lander (depicted in the background).



NASA
National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Thomas A. Mutch Memorial Station

Dedicated to the memory of Tim Mutch, whose imagination, verve and resolve contributed greatly to the exploration of the solar system.

Signed at the City of Washington, D.C., in the United States of America

Robert A. Frosch, *Administrator*

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